

Freedom of Information Policy



September 2020

Introduction

We will comply with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and any subsequent relevant legislation, to ensure all information held by the school is treated in a manner that is fair and lawful.

This policy should be used in conjunction with our Acceptable Use and e-Safety Policy and Data Protection and Data Handling Policy.

Data Gathering and Storage

Information will only be gathered and stored for specific purposes.

In order to be able to respond to requests for information we will implement effective record management policies to enable staff to identify whether data is held and, if it is, locate it quickly and easily.

Information held will be regularly reviewed with a view to archiving or destruction, where appropriate.

Dealing with Requests for Information

Theoretically any request for information is a request under the Freedom of Information Act. However, we have taken the decision that we will not consider any request that forms part of normal business of school to be a Freedom of Information request. Only those requests which are considered to be outside the normal remit of school business will be recorded as Freedom of Information requests. We will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by the school.

Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (e.g. school, LA, hospital). We will also exercise our duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.

The school will supply data requested within 20 working days, subject to any exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined charge limit. All requests for information should still be dealt with in compliance with the 20 working day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.

If a response will take longer than ten working days to respond an acknowledgement should be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information

will be supplied. This acknowledgement does allow the school to exceed the overall 20-day deadline.

The charge limit is currently £450, calculated at 18 hours work at a flat rate of £25 per hour.

The School Business Manager will be responsible for ensuring that requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on the school's tracking database.

Copies of data supplied should be retained for two years from the date it was put into the public domain.

Applying Exemptions

A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner's website. There are two types of exemption – absolute and qualified. In practice there are very few which are likely to be applied by the education sector.

The decision to apply absolute exemptions should not be taken by individual members of staff but should be made by a group of at least three Governors and/or Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher.

Even if the group decides information should not be disclosed, advice should be sought from the CWAC Data Protection Officer to confirm that the information should not be disclosed.

Logging Request Received

We will keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes, noting:

1. Date the request was received
2. Name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request
3. Date the request was fulfilled or refused
4. Reason for any exemption being applied
5. Reason for any failure to meet the 20-day deadline.

This policy will be reviewed every year.